

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Cowper.*



THE PHILOSOPHER'S GARDEN.

NINE-TENTHS OF THE LAW.

CHAPTER XVIII.—A NIGHT OF ALARM.

Such wat'ry orbicles young boys do blow
Out from their soapy shells.

—*Giles Fletcher.*

DR. KALTMANN and his guest had just finished dinner when Michael was announced. The

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squire, on hearing his name, uttered an exclamation of impatience and surprise.

"Tell the fellow to go away again," he said. "I won't see him."

"He has come all the way from England," the servant answered, respectfully.

"He may go all the way back again," said the squire.

The man lingered, unable to conceive that such a dismissal could really be intended.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

"Who is he?" Dr. Kaltmann asked.

"One of my country-bumpkins, that's all," was the indignant answer.

"What does he want?"

"I don't know—nor care. They always want something, those fellows. Tell him to go."

"Not so," the doctor answered. "I will look on him first, and have a chatter with him. We are not such outer barbarians here as to send away a stranger from our courts when he has travelled all the way from England to see us, or to see one of our guests. Let him have some dinner, and then, if you may not see him I will. What was that name you called him—Bumpkin? That means little tree—*Baumchen*. I must see your little tree; an example, I presume, of your *Bauer* folk."

"You can do as you like with your trees and bowers," said Mr. Neville, "as long as you let me alone, but I wish he had stayed at home."

Michael was very well entertained that evening. He had some supper by himself, and then Dr. Kaltmann sent for him into his study. The doctor had expected to see a peasant in a smockfrock—a blouse, as he called it—and was surprised at Michael's intelligent manner and genteel appearance. He had heard that there was not much education in England except among the aristocracy, and supposed that every one who cultivated the ground must be more or less boorish and ignorant. He had anticipated some amusement from Michael's peculiarities. Michael, on the other hand, was delighted to find himself in the company of one so highly scientific as Dr. Kaltmann was supposed to be. He had been told a great deal about him by the butler, while at supper, and had inspected some of the mechanical curiosities with which the hall was furnished. There was a skeleton in the study where Dr. Kaltmann received him, to which a set of wires had been attached, communicating with a galvanic battery, to make it "look alive," as the doctor expressed it. Electricity, he said, was the principle of life; he should make further advances with it by-and-by. Meantime, when he set his battery power to work, the skeleton shook at some of its joints; though it was not very much like life so far. There was also an orrery, and a telescope, and an air-pump, and other pieces of apparatus, to say nothing of the parabolic curves upon the walls, which looked very imposing. Michael soon informed the doctor that he was himself a votary of science, and manifested so great an interest in everything that he saw around him that Dr. Kaltmann shook hands with him three times in less than half an hour, and took him at last into the "meat saloon," where Mr. Neville-Thornton still lingered over his coffee.

The squire was obliged to be civil to him then; and as he listened to the conversation between Michael and his host, carried on in English under difficulties, with a few words in German from Michael now and then, he found so much entertainment that he quite recovered his temper, and began to feel almost glad that Michael had arrived. He need not listen to anything he had to say about business, he said to himself; and really, to hear him and the doctor talking science together, each believing in the other so thoroughly and simply, and each thinking himself so clever, was as good as a play.

Michael did not intend to lose any opportunity of speaking to Mr. Thornton on the subject which had brought him thither; and finding himself alone with

him for a few minutes in the course of the evening, he began upon it at once.

Mr. Neville-Thornton was by that time in a good humour, and let him talk.

"I don't care a rap who has the farm or the house either," he said, "as long as I have a responsible tenant. Settle it among yourselves, please yourselves and you will please me."

Michael thanked him, but explained that "settling it amongst themselves" meant leaving Mr. Chamberlain to do as he pleased. But Mr. Neville-Thornton kept on repeating, "Settle it among yourselves—settle it among yourselves," while looking towards the door in the hope that the master of the house would return and put an end to the discourse.

Michael, however, made the best of his opportunity, and pleaded his cause so effectually, that the squire promised at last to give him what he wanted.

"Keep the farm, if that will satisfy you," he said. "Chamberlain can stay at Windy Gorse; it's a very good house—good enough for him or for you either. I don't care which of you has it."

"We are not to be turned out of the Goshen, then; you promise me that?" said Michael.

"Anything you like," said the squire.

"That is all I want," said Michael. "You will give me a letter to Chamberlain to say so."

"I can't write to-night."

"To-morrow, then?"

"Yes; when to-morrow comes."

"Then I may consider it settled?"

"There's a difficulty, however," said the squire, "which I had overlooked. Chamberlain won't farm Windy Gorse nor Rushy Pastures. I don't care about his farming on his own account at all; he will find plenty to do without that; but if he occupies the house, what is to be done with the land?"

"If you remember," said Michael, "I proposed to you to take that myself."

"Without the house?"

"Yes; I can live at the Goshen and farm Windy Gorse and the Pastures too, if you like. I am anxious to show what science can do with such land. There's the high and dry, and the low and wet. Each would require a different method of treatment, of course. The plan I should propose—"

"You need not worry me about plans. If you take either or both those farms in hand you may do what you like with them in the way of improvements, provided you don't ask me for money, and, of course, pay your rent."

Finally it was agreed that Mr. Brownlow should be left in quiet possession of the Goshen, and that Michael should have Windy Gorse and Rushy Pastures to experiment upon, Mr. Chamberlain continuing to reside at the house which had been improved and decorated for him, and retaining in his occupation as much of the surrounding pasture land as he might require for his own use. The squire promised to write Mr. Chamberlain a letter to this effect. He would send it by post, he said. But Michael would give him no peace until he had promised to let him be himself the bearer of it. Time pressed; Lady-day was near, and Mr. Chamberlain would be sending them notice. He did not wish to return with his errand only half accomplished. He hoped the squire would give him a written authority to show to Mr. Chamberlain.

Michael did not altogether trust the squire, and feared that unless the letter was written at once the

terms which had been agreed upon would be forgotten or disregarded.

"I shall be ready to start home to-morrow morning," said Michael; "you will let me have the letter to take with me, sir, I hope?"

"Oh, yes; anything you like," said the squire.

By this time Dr. Kaltmann had returned to the room.

"Before you go away," he said to Michael, "you must see my garden and all my scientific inventions. You will learn something from my science; you will very much be pleased."

Michael was delighted at the prospect, and, having accomplished his object with the squire, and feeling very tired with his long walk, said he should like to go to bed, upon which the doctor very obligingly offered to show Michael to his room. He led the way up a winding staircase, of which there were two, one at each end of the house, to a large and well-furnished chamber. The little tourist's bag, which he had carried so far, and which had seemed so heavy the day before, looked very small now, lying upon a table in the middle of the room, and Michael felt small in proportion.

"Where is your peck?" the doctor asked.

"I left it at Coblenz: I walked here."

"Walked!" cried the doctor; "walked, on your feet? It is five miles!"

"Five-and-twenty, I should say!" Michael exclaimed; "five-and-twenty at least."

"Aha!" said the doctor, with a proud look, "the miles of our Fatherland are great: everything here is great. You are surprised: you did expect to find our miles small, like your own; you find they are taller, much taller. One German mile is par with four and a half English. It is so in all things. One German is par with four and a half English."

He laughed complacently, and Michael was too tired to dispute the point. There was truth in his assertion as to the miles, at all events.

"You will be call to-morrow morning?" Dr. Kaltmann asked. "Yes? At what hour? At eight?"

"Eight will do very well," said Michael; "but I shall be sure to wake."

"Yes; you shall be sure to wake," said the doctor, "at eight *punkt*."

He went to the recess where the bedstead was, and having examined it, to see that it was "all right," he said, wished him good night.

When he was gone, Michael took a survey of the room. It was an old-fashioned chamber; the floor was highly polished and the furniture was quaint and curious; there was an earthenware stove in one corner, and a clock in a large case, almost as tall and wide as a wardrobe, against the wall.

Michael sat down upon a large heavy chair, which seemed to have been placed in readiness for him near the bed. But he sprang up again instantly. There must have been a cat in the chair, and he had sat down upon it; so he thought. The cat had spat and squalled furiously, and he wondered that he had escaped her teeth and claws. The noise she had made was quite equal to that which "four and a half" English cats could have produced. But though he looked everywhere about the room no cat was to be seen. He did not like the idea of going to bed with an angry cat of such dimensions as he pictured to himself in his chamber, and he searched anxiously to find her. He gave it up at last, and just before

getting into bed sat down for a moment in the same chair. Again the cat squalled and spat at him, and he started up more alarmed than before. But an examination of the chair soon satisfied him that this was only one of the doctor's scientific devices for the entertainment of his guests. There was no cat. The sound was produced by the air from the cushion, which was forced through a kind of squeak-trap, as in a child's toy, whenever any one sat down in it. It was a philosopher's toy, not a child's; that was the only difference.

The bed was of the kind common in Germany, in the form of a large open trough. It sloped from the head to the foot. It had a great hard pillow like a wedge at the upper end of it, and a bag of eider down, as large as a feather bed, as a coverlet. It mattered very little to Michael what the bed was like. He was so tired that he could have slept upon the floor. He got into it, and fell asleep immediately.

He woke up suddenly after three or four hours; something strange had happened, but he could not tell what. At first he thought he must have fallen out of bed; but that could hardly be, for he found himself upon his feet close to the footboard, surrounded by a heap of bedclothes. The bedstead seemed to have broken down, or rather to have risen up under him. It appeared to be standing upright upon its end, but it was so dark that he could only feel about him and form conjectures. Going to bed again under the circumstances was impossible, and as the night was very cold he rolled himself up in the bedclothes and tried to go to sleep again upon the floor. It was another of the doctor's toys, he supposed. These new applications of science might be amusing, but they were decidedly inconvenient. He lay awake thinking about them, and wishing he was at home at the Goshen. Presently there was a rumbling sound near his head, though he had not the least idea in what part of the room his head was. Then a strange unearthly voice, with a strong nasal twang, made itself heard.

It uttered only a single word, and that a word of no particular import, apparently. "Try"—that was it; or it might have been "dry." What could it mean, and where could it come from? It was in the room with him; of that there could be no doubt; it was a human voice, though harsh and strange in its tone, as if mocking him.

"Who is there?" Michael asked. "What do you want?"

But there was no answer.

"It said 'dry,'" Michael murmured to himself, listening intently, "or else 'try.' Is this another trick, I wonder? What can it mean?"

He could not sleep for thinking of it; he was cold also, and only half covered with the bedclothes; he wished very much for the morning; the German hours he began to think were as long as the German miles. For a considerable time there was no further disturbance; the silence which reigned around him was unbroken. Then suddenly, the low murmuring sound which he had heard before again fell upon his ears, and the same strange, mocking, nasal voice called out again. This time also it uttered but one word, a word which found its echo in Michael Brownlow's bosom—"Fear."

"Who are you? What do you want?" said Michael, in trembling tones. He would not have allowed that he was frightened; but he could not help feeling very much excited and disturbed.

"Fear!" What could it mean? What unexpected catastrophe might it foreshadow? Only a trick, perhaps; another of the doctor's practical jokes; but something unpleasant, no doubt. A spectre, very likely, or a skeleton made to "look alive" by wires, or some other scientific object to startle and annoy him. He remembered that Dr. Kaltmann had asked him, in a significant sort of way, whether he believed in ghosts and witches, and how he accounted for the hold which such ideas had obtained upon the human brain. Of course he had said No; adding that he should like to see a ghost, and then he should be better qualified to give an opinion on the subject. He began to wish now that he had not said so; he had had mystery enough for one night; he did not want any more. He was getting very nervous, and did not feel sure that he should not cry out and alarm the house if anything very strange and spectral should appear to him, even though he might have made up his mind beforehand that it could only be one of the doctor's experiments in practical science.

Another hour—a German hour, too, it seemed—passed by, and nothing happened. Then again the mysterious sound was heard, and the voice called out, in a whistling sort of tone, "Feenf!"

Immediately afterwards Michael fancied he heard a distant clock strike five.

"Dry, fear, feenf," said Michael, to himself, the truth beginning to dawn upon him; "why, that is German for three, four, five. It is a clock, and it speaks instead of striking. A capital idea, if only one is prepared for it; it saves counting the strokes. If I had been awake I should have heard it say *elf*, *zwölf*, *ein*, and *zwei*. I must examine that clock tomorrow morning; I could perhaps make one at the Goshen and put it up in the stable-yard, with a voice loud enough to be heard all over the neighbourhood. It would astonish the people. It is very clever. I only wish all Dr. Kaltmann's applications of practical science were as sensible and harmless as this!"

With a mind much relieved, he rolled himself again in his blanket and slept till morning. Although he was not called at eight, as he had expected to be, he awoke in good time, and began to dress. There was a chair before the dressing-glass, and he sat down in it, after proving it, lest there should be another cat in the cushion, and began to shave. He had made three or four strokes with the razor, when suddenly a musical-box, concealed in the chair, began to play. It was intended to play opera tunes all the while a lady was "doing her hair" or a gentleman shaving, and ought to have begun the moment he sat down, but was out of order, and did not go off at the proper moment. The music itself might have been pleasant enough, but a sudden and loud "tra-ra," at a time and place utterly unexpected, was enough to startle any one; and Michael cut a deep gash in his chin. He had hardly succeeded in staunching the blood, when Dr. Kaltmann knocked at his door, and asked him how he had slept.

Michael pointed to the bedstead, the bottom of which had assumed a perpendicular position, having turned upon a pivot, so that the head had gone up, while the foot touched the floor.

"Aha!" said the doctor, with much complacency; "I see it has performed. It has done well. I told you you should be call at eight o'clock. That is my own invented bedstead. I set it for you to go up at eight; that works by itself; it saves calling; it prevents a forget; it forbids a mistake."

"But it went up at two," said Michael; "or thereabouts; the mistake may have been forbidden, but it happened all the same."

"What, it did throw you out so early? Then it is out of order; it should have gone up at eight. I must have it attended to; it is very good idea when it will work true."

"It's a very bad one when it won't," said Michael. "The worst of these scientific things is that they get out of order. The bed goes off too soon, and the musical-box too late. See how I have cut myself; and I was obliged to sleep on the floor, and found it very cold."

"Cold?" said the doctor; "you ought not to have been cold; there is in the room one large stove."

"A stove!" said Michael, wondering much why he should speak of that, as it had not been lighted.

The doctor went to it and opened the door. "Here is the heat centre," he said, pointing to a coil inside. "This is another of my own inventions. It contains a peculiar preparation, which is secret. It is designed to absorb—drink in the sun's heat rays by day, and give them out by night. It drinks in for twelve hours and expires for even so long."

"I did not feel it," said Michael; "it must have expired before its time, like the bedstead." Dr. Kaltmann looked at Michael as much as to say, "Then you ought to have felt it." "The principle is good, nevertheless," he said. "It is a great save-coal."

"I don't doubt that," said Michael, shivering.

"You have open fires in your England; that is waste. We shall not want fires indoors when I have brought my invention a little wider to perfection. I will lay up sun-heat by day and give it out by night. I will lay it up in summer and pour it forth in winter. I will do the same with light rays; I shall trap the beams for twelve hours each day and let them loose at night. I have apparatus to be made for that end; it will succeed; it will answer to my expect."

"As well as the stove, perhaps," Michael observed.

"Even so well," said the doctor.

Michael remembered to have heard of bottled lightning, and he said so.

"There you have example," said the doctor, taking it *au sérieux*. "It is all electricity. That is the principle of all things. All is of one. We shall see."

"Perhaps we shall," said Michael, but he did not think that the doctor's borrowed light would help him to see, any more than the absorbed heat had helped to warm him. He began to think that Dr. Kaltmann was not quite so practical as he had imagined. The light and heat scheme was too much like a famous project which he had read of for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers.

"Did you hear my clock?" Dr. Kaltmann asked, presently.

"Yes," said Michael; "that is very clever."

"Aha! yes; that is my masterpiece."

"Did you make it yourself?" Michael asked.

"Ja," said the doctor, confidently. "Yes. Ja."

"Neun," said the clock the next instant. It meant to say "nine," but the sound was identical with the German *nein*, or no.

"Which am I to believe?" said Michael, turning to the doctor, with a smile.

"Which should know best?" the latter asked.

"You ought, no doubt," said Michael. "It must be a good-for-nothing clock, though, to deny its maker."

"What do you mean by that?" Dr. Kaltmann asked, looking at Michael sternly.

Michael hardly knew how much had been implied by his short speech until he began to think about it. He did not wish to recall what he had said, however, therefore made no reply, and the doctor left the room. He was not well pleased with Michael, partly because he had not appreciated the warmth he had provided for his comfort, and partly because of the reproach which he thought had been aimed at himself.

"After all," he said, as he quitted the room, "he is only *Bauer*, which is in English *boor*. He has no true philosophy. He cannot help it; he is *dumm*."

After breakfast, which Michael took with the servants, he walked through the gardens, and inspected all Dr. Kaltmann's scientific contrivances. The doctor was engaged, and sent a man with him with orders to show him everything. He saw the water circulate through the arteries and veins; he ascended a tower which was being built to receive an electrical battery and apparatus, by which clouds were to be attracted when rain was wanted, and driven to a distance when enough had been discharged. He saw the hotbeds where the sun's rays were to be accumulated and stored up for the night or even for winter use, and narrowly escaped some practical jokes, which the exuberance of the doctor's invention had prepared for the unwary.

He was admonished of the flight of time by the Krupp gun, and, as soon as he heard it, turned his steps towards the house. He had come to Germany for business of more importance than these scientific trifles. He had to get his letter of authority from Mr. Neville-Thornton, and then to make his way back to Coblenz on foot, as he had come. He hoped to be in time to continue his journey by a night train, and so make the best of his way back to England

with the important document which was to set all things right in his possession. He had spent more time than he intended in his inspection of the doctor's curiosities, and was dismayed to find, on looking at his watch, that noon was long past, and that it was, in fact, nearly one o'clock.

"I thought the gun was fired at twelve?" he said.

"Yes," his companion answered, "when it is in order, but that is not always."

"The sun is never wrong," said Michael, angrily.

"No; but the lenses get out of place somehow."

"So much for Dr. Kaltmann's practical science," said Michael, hastening his steps. "All his applications of it go wrong, I think. He makes even the sun speak falsely."

As he approached the house, a carriage and pair, which had been standing there, drove off. It had turned the corner, and was lost to view before he reached the door.

"Where is Mr. Neville-Thornton?" he asked of the servants who were lingering about.

"Mr. Dornton?"

"Yes; the English gentleman?"

"He is forth; he is go."

"Gone!" cried Michael; "where to?"

"To Italy."

"Italy!"

"Yes; he will travel fast; he will catch the train at Coblenz."

"Has he left a letter for me?" Michael asked, with a sort of forlorn hope.

"I will inquire," said the man.

His inquiries were without result. The squire was gone, and had left neither letter nor message. Dr. Kaltmann was gone with him to see him on his way. It was time for Michael to go also, if he would reach Coblenz before night. It was no use waiting any longer there; and with a heavy heart he set forth again upon his weary walk of five long German miles.

ANTS.

BY THE REV. W. FARREN WHITE, M.A., VICAR OF STONEHOUSE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

IV.

THE HONEY ANT OF MEXICO.

AMONG other peculiar species of ants I have noticed one in the British Museum, which is very remarkable; it is called the Honey Ant; its

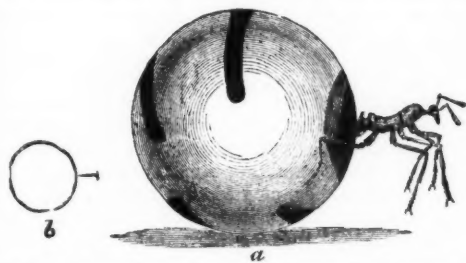


Fig. 12.—a, *Myrmecocystus Mexicanus*; b, approximate natural size.

scientific name being *Myrmecocystus Mexicanus*. Its

native land is Mexico. It has, however, recently been found by the Rev. H. C. McCook in the "Garden of the Gods," Colorado. It has its abdomen immoderately distended by honey injected through its mouth by those workers who collect it. It looks as if its head and shoulders were disengaged from the rest of its body, and that thus shorn of its fair proportions, it was struggling under difficulties round the world to seek its fortune. It has been noticed that when filled with honey the globular abdomen of these honey-bearers resembles small Delaware grapes. According to Mr. Smith, the honey undergoes in the bodies of this ant a sort of distillation, and when thus distilled, it is given to the young brood. These ants are sold, he is informed, in the Mexican markets by measure, a quantity put into a suitable vessel, and the honey is then pressed out, and forms a basis of an exhilarating drink, something like the wine called mead, which is still made in some parts of Surrey and Hampshire, and, I may add, Gloucestershire.

tershire, since I had some in my possession manufactured by a Stonehouse bee-master from the fruits of the industry of the bees in the vicarage garden.

"LITTLE PEOPLE" WITH LARGE HEADS.

Some ants, as I have mentioned, there are quite one inch long, such as the female of *Formica gigas*, of Borneo, and the male *Dorylus*, from South Africa. I have a fine series of this interesting species from the Cape. I have another species, the greater part of an inch in length, from Sierra Leone, called *Ponera pestilentialis*, from the terrible odour which clings to it, and which is so powerful and subtle that, in a very short time, it permeates the atmosphere of a large room. Others there are with heads of enormous dimensions, as the "Driver" of Africa, the Umbrella Ant, of Brazil, and the large worker of the House Ant of Madeira. In the year 1877 I secured several of these large-headed fellows, who, I think,

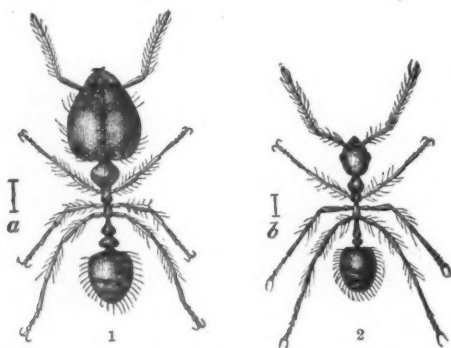


Fig. 13.—*Myrmica* (*Pheidole*) *lavigata*. House Ant of Madeira. 1. Large-headed Worker. 2. Small Worker.

must be the police or soldiers of the tribe, in the baker's shop in the Borough.

THE HARVESTING ANTS OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE
CONFIRMING THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE.

When speaking of those with heads of extraordinary size, I must not omit to call your attention to the Provident Ant of India, called so on account of the methodical manner in which it lays up its food for future need, in the same manner as the Harvesting Ants of the South of France, whose marvellous habits are so graphically described by Moggeridge in a work which was published only in 1873, and which clothes the statement of Scripture with such a true and beautiful significance. Saith the inspired naturalist, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." Of these ants there are four kinds: the *Atta barbara*, under two forms — one wholly black, the other red-headed; *Atta structor*, similar to *barbara*, but of a claret-brown colour; and a minute yellow ant, the large workers of which have gigantic heads, named *Pheidole*, or *Atta megacephala*. In one nest of *barbara* Moggeridge found granaries containing seeds taken from more than twelve species of plants; and from the subterranean granaries of *Atta structor* and *Atta barbara* he tells us in his "Supplement" to his original narrative, that he was able to collect the seeds or small dry fruits of fifty-four

distinct species of wild plants. He found that the seeds, though moist, showed no trace of germination, and the ants, he concluded, from careful

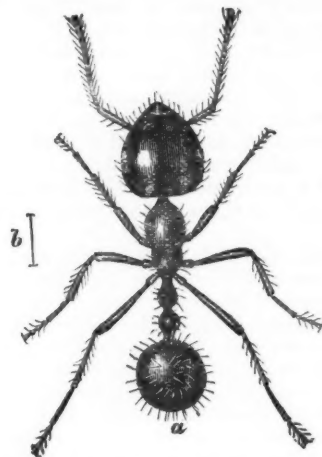


Fig. 14.—*Aphengaster Barbara*; b, natural size.

observations, exercised a power over them which checks the natural tendency to germinate, and he noticed that if, by any chance, the seed should assert its inherent power, it was immediately checked by the wise little people destroying the radicle. Sir John Lubbock, who kindly gave me specimens of *barbara* from a colony he had from Italy for the purpose of observation, has assured me that they will not store grain unless there are a large number in the colony. It is noteworthy that Mr. Smith has recorded *Atta barbara* as having been discovered in Palestine, and that in the Mishna, or text of the Talmud, there are directions as to the rights of the gleaners in the case of corn found in the granaries of ants, wherein it is stated that if discovered after the reapers have passed, the upper part of the heap of grain shall go to the poor, and the lower to the proprietor of the field, though the Rabbi Meir expresses the opinion that the whole should go to the poor.

This interesting Jewish legislative enactment is fully discussed by Moggeridge; and we may, with him, draw therefrom the just conclusion that the Harvesting Ants of Syria had earned a place in the ancient records by amassing stores of grain of sufficient size, and so disposed as to make them worth collecting.

BRIEF CAREER OF THE MALES AMONG THE "LITTLE PEOPLE."

Let us now unfold more in detail the ways and doings, the manners and customs, of the little people, but exceeding wise. We left the members of the royal family, it will be remembered, dancing joyously in the glorious fields of light. Sometimes the swarms of a whole district have been noticed to unite their infinite myriads, and seen at a distance produce an effect resembling the flashing of the Aurora Borealis; sometimes, as I have mentioned, the effect is that of rainbow hues in spray of laughing waterfalls; sometimes that of fire; sometimes that of smoke-wreath. The males, as already noticed, are short-lived, some dying a natural death, and others, together with many of the females, being devoured by birds and fishes when they fall upon the water, and by

spiders when they get entangled in their webs. This last was the fate of hundreds of the males of the *Formica umbrata* in the year 1876, a species generally distinguished from the common yellow by its pubescent legs and antennæ, the larger head of the female, and the smoky wings of the males. A very extensive colony established against my vicarage produces every year many thousands of males. These are carefully guarded and marshalled by the workers, and it appears are not allowed to leave the common home without their permission, and when once it is secured they swarm over the ground and upwards into the sunbeams. In 1876 they were interrupted in their upward flight by the many webs spread over the jessamine and cotoneaster upon the house. The nets were crowded with the little people, and the spiders kept high festival.

SELF-SACRIFICE OF THE FEMALES.

Let us now watch the marvellous career of those winged females who escape the keen glance of active enemies, or survive the fatal effects of unpropitious weather. They commence the business of their unselfish lives by doing all the work that is usually done by the common labourers; and in order to live for others more effectually, they strip themselves of their wings and so cut off all inducement to sport gaily in the sun-bathed air, to the neglect of their numerous offspring. Such an extraordinary instance of self-sacrifice I witnessed when at Bournemouth. A female of *Formica nigra*, the common garden ant, I found deprived of three of her wings. I persevered in watching her every movement, and was agreeably astonished to see her deliberately snap off the remaining wing. I thus confirmed the testimony of M. P. Hüber, a native of Switzerland, distinguished for his extensive series of observations on the economy of ants. It will be interesting to have the result of his experience in his own words.

"I took," says he, "some earth and strewed it lightly over the table, and then covered it with a bell-glass. I induced a female to go under the glass by presenting to her a fragment of straw, on which she mounted, and upon this I conveyed her to her new habitation. Scarcely did she perceive the earth which covered the bottom of her abode, than she extended her wings with some effort, bringing them before her head, crossing them in every direction, throwing them from side to side, and producing so many singular contortions, that her four wings fell off at the same moment in my presence. After this change she reposed, brushed her corselet with her feet, then traversed the ground, evidently appearing to seek a place of shelter. She partook of the honey I gave her, and at last found a hiding-place under some loose earth which formed a little natural grotto. On several females of different species I tried the same experiment, and always obtained the same result."

ELECTION OF QUEEN BY HER SUBJECTS.

Though it is evident that females in case of necessity are enabled unassisted to construct their habitations, and to educate their family, yet, as a general rule, while they introduce their young into the colony, the workers build and nurse and give them, as we shall see, a liberal education.

And now it must be noticed that all the females do not quit the old home to seek their fortune amid

newer scenes, since it is necessary that some should linger to keep up the population. All being naturally anxious to try their glittering wings before their early widowhood, and oftentimes life-long imprisonment, means are adopted by the workers to detain them against their will and crown them queens by force, and yet with the diadem of a fond attachment. And how? They strip them of their wings, and thus keep them royal prisoners. Hüber, while watching an emmet's residence, observed the greater number of females quit the nest, never to return. One, however, he says, was about to take flight when the labourers retained her by her feet, kept her down by main force, tore off her wings, and conducted her back to her native home, where they obstinately guarded her. Others he noticed mutilated and imprisoned in like manner. The workers, knowing full well that the very existence of their colony depends upon the presence among them of a sufficient number of queens, guard them when mutilated with the greatest assiduity, nourish them with the most wakeful care, conduct them to those quarters of their domicile of most genial temperature, allow them not to refresh themselves with summer gales, and abandon them, no, not for an hour. When the queen gives birth to a numerous progeny, in the form of tiny eggs, the desire of quitting her abode being gone, she no longer is placed under constraint, yet still is blessed with a constant guard, who watch her every movement, anticipate her every want, and provide with admirable foresight and over-anxious care her daily—nay, hourly—necessities. A sentinel is placed near the body of the queen to carry off the little eggs as soon as laid. As soon as it leaves her presence with its precious burden another takes its place to watch her. A retinue attends her of from three to fifteen in number, sometimes even more, whose duties in offering her refreshments and accompanying her through the difficult passages are not only faithfully discharged, but whose affection is unceasingly manifested as they caress her with their antennæ. In the baker's shop in the Kennington Road, which I found overrun in every part by thousands of the *Myrmica domestica*, I ob-

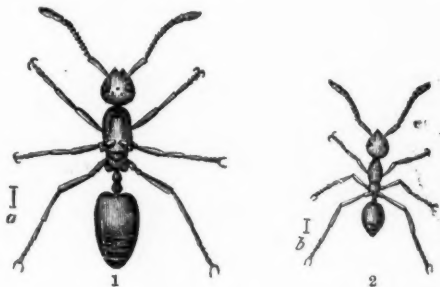


Fig. 15.—*Myrmica domestica*.

1. Queen (apterous female); a, natural size. 2. One of her subjects; b, natural size.

served, it will be remembered, the queen taking a morning walk in her home park, which consisted in the white-washed wall of the baker's shop, and she was attended by a body-guard of about a dozen of her loyal subjects. In the dripping-pan at Stanhope Place, which I found swarming with the same species, I was able to detect the presence of the queen by the

crowd of tiny workers who completely surrounded her; and so assiduous were they in their attention, and so devoted in their loyalty, that they covered her with their bodies, and thus shrouded her from the vulgar gaze, while at the same time always indicating her existence by their clustering numbers.

LOYALTY OF THE "LITTLE PEOPLE."

Last year I received by post from Mr. Dale a colony of the minute rare ant *Myrmica unifasciata*. It consisted of a queen, the royal children, and many of her faithful subjects. They reached me alive, so that for many days I carefully watched their movements. I was able to witness the loyalty of the little people for their beloved sovereign. It was very marked. They attended her in her perambulations, they formed round her when she rested; some showed their regard for her by gently walking over her, others by patiently watching by her and cherishing her with their antennæ, and in every way endeavouring to testify to their affectionate attachment and generous submission. It has been noticed that "in whatever apartment a queen condescends to be present, she commands obedience and respect, and that a universal gladness spreads itself through the whole cell, which is expressed by particular acts of joy and exultation."

THE "LITTLE PEOPLE" AT PLAY.

They have, I have noticed, "a peculiar way of skipping, leaping, and standing up on their hind legs and prancing with the others. These frolics they make use of both to congratulate each other when they meet, and to show their regard for the queen." I have observed them also in the case of the *Formica umbrata* thus gambolling together when guarding the youthful princes at the entrance of their palaces, while welcoming their presence, and, at the same time, methodically repressing their enthusiasm and natural longing for independence. These frolicsome exercises I have witnessed in the case of the *Formica aliena*, when the sun has shed its gladsome rays suddenly upon them through the glass sides of one of my artificial *formicaria*, or formic crystal palaces. I have been also delighted to witness them in the case of the *Formica flava*, when, having placed a formicarium which enclosed this common yellow species near the fire, and the welcome heat caused the little people to swarm in the passages and testify their gladness at the suddenly-increased temperature, they seemed hardly to be able to contain themselves for joy. They embraced each other, and skipped and danced like playful lambs or kittens.

OUT AMONG THE TURKOMANS

BY THE REV JAMES BASSETT, OF TEHERAN, PERSIA.

III.—A MOLLAH ON DREAMS.

AFTER a weary night march, continuing from dark until dawn, the first impulse of the traveller is to sleep. They who travel with their own horses, or the hired animals of a caravan, may take with them such supply of the comforts and luxuries of life as their purses can afford or their wills may dictate. But a person riding post, especially on a Persian line, where no more than two or three horses can be had at a station, can make but scanty provision in the way of beds and bedding. My custom was to take an empty tick or bag only, to be filled with straw at night for a bed, and to be emptied in the morning and lashed with overcoat to the back of my saddle. In most places straw could be had, for it is generally kept for the post-horses.

The true situation cannot well be understood without some knowledge of the caravansaries of the East. These buildings, constructed for the accommodation of travellers, are more like forts than like places of entertainment. They differ in size, material of construction, and in comeliness, yet all possess some common features which justify the application of the name to them.

The caravansarie in which we lodged was a good representative of the best class of such structures. The features identifying it with the class were the large hollow square, on the four sides of which, the gateways excepted, were brick platforms, the flat roof, and arched cells. The platforms in front of the cells, or rooms, were each about four feet wide and three feet high. The arched roofs of the rooms looked like ant-hills in the flat roofs. Another very common feature was the human beings, men and

women and children, lying in various conditions upon the platforms, or stowed away in the cells, while many horses, donkeys, and mules of the pilgrims were fastened near their owners. The excellent two-storey front over the main entrance to the square was an exceptionally good feature. The chambers were separated from each other by arched corridors, and the building presented the cleanliness of a new structure. The principal court of the station, or fortress, was filled with people lying in every nook and alcove, also on the ground in the sunlight and on the flat roofs of the water reservoirs. Being specially favoured, I obtained a bala khana, as a chamber is called. The room was about twelve feet square, the walls, floor, and arched ceiling were of kiln-burned brick and unplastered. Two arched spaces for windows had been constructed in one side of the room only. But there was no sash and no glass, and doors seemed not to have been taken into the account. The wind blew with increasing force as the day advanced and as the heat increased, and tossed great clouds of dust through every open doorway and window.

These observations had been taken while the man was putting away the luggage, and while the boy had gone with the tick to fill it. He soon returned, saying that no straw was to be had in the place. I therefore spread out the empty tick on the brick floor, and upon it the saddle-bags for a pillow, and wrapping a shawl about me, laid down to sleep. The discomfort occasioned by the hard bricks of the floor could not for a long time overbalance the fatigue caused by the night journey.

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Strangely releasing myself from all the repulsive objects around me, with the rapidity of thought I traversed continents, oceans, and many years of the past, and stood before a mansion of familiar form. I looked intently upon it, and wondered how unchanged which seemed to be flooded with a sneen of light, falling on trees whose dense and dark green foliage told of unfailing fountains, and flowers of all hues were blooming in the profusion and perfume of an earthly paradise.



A TURKOMAN CHIEF.

it stood, and in thought inquired whom, of all those I once knew within, I should now find. Passing up the steps, which looked just as they did a score of years ago, I entered the dwelling, seeking and calling one and another of the former inmates; but no one of them all could be found. Disappointed and sad I turned away, hardly knowing whither, but was awakened from the perplexing thoughts of the moment by the surpassing brilliancy of the scenes in which I found myself. I was in a beautiful garden

While my thoughts were diverted by the sight of these delightful objects, I walked on unconscious of direction and without purpose. But my attention was suddenly turned from these by the appearance before me, as if by magic, of a little girl. The sight recalled my wandering and my purpose. Calling her, I inquired, "Who are you, and where your home? Tell me," then I said, "where are —, whom I wish to see." "There, in that house," said she, turning towards a goodly mansion which until then I had not

observed, but which I now saw was near the one I had at first entered. Hastening up to it, I was soon seated in a comfortable drawing-room. I saw some of my old acquaintances enter the room, and talked with them as in other days. Yet I was all the time painfully conscious that some whom I wished to find were not among them. Their absence startled me, and became more and more a source of anxiety, and the chief thought in my mind. But I suppressed all expressions of great grief or earnestness. All quickly passed from my sight. Then one person only entered the room quietly; not a sound was to be heard except my own half-suppressed voice, as I asked "Where are they?" I was answered by a moan, followed by a wail; I heard the words repeated, "Woe, woe!" mingled with other and discordant sounds. I awoke to hear the words repeated in the tones of a female voice, "Oh, my son, my son, woe is me, woe is me! My son, my son!"

Rising and crossing the corridor, I saw, seated upon a mattress, an old Mussulman woman, swaying her body backward and forward in time with the cadence of her dirge, while the flood of tears bespoke the sincerity of her heart in the wailing for her dead boy. On inquiry I learned that such was her custom. The stated seasons of mourning for the dead are observed with conscientious care by the more superstitious and rigid Mussulmans. With some it is a set hour of each day, with others a day of the week.

My near neighbour, a Persian woman, has, during three years, on the day of the week on which her husband died, gathered a company of relatives and friends of the deceased at her house for wailing. A moollah presides, and reads from the Koran or from other religious book relating to the death of some of the Mohammedan saints, while the women weep in unison with the sentiment expressed by the reader. Instead of reading, the moollah frequently delivers an eulogy on the deceased, which consists of praises for his charitable acts and his greatness in the town. But the discourse more often relates to the pathetic parts in the history of the chief saints of Islam.

To a Mussulman woman the death of her only son is the greatest of her misfortunes, and may well be made the chief occasion of her grief. It means the loss of her defence against rivals and against the oppressor, her support in old age, and the loss of the maternal supremacy.

I observed that some of the people near her endeavoured to console the woman whose voice I had heard, but she seemed to reject all efforts of the kind, and to find greater comfort in weeping. Her religion could bring only a poor consolation, certainly none to meet the pain with any commensurate remedy. The laws of that religion were rather against her in this calamity.

The transition from the dream to the reality is often, by force of contrast, painfully disappointing. While pursuing this thought, and thinking how strangely the mind may release itself from present associations, the Persian who was in the room with me seemed to get the impression that I was troubled about the journey, and, thinking it to be within his power to dispel my anxiety, he said, in Persian, "Do not be afraid of the Turkomans, we have a big gun in the caravan, and I have obtained a pistol: trust in God." "Yes," I replied; "when we started on our journey you said that we need not take any weapons; we will trust in God; but as soon as you came to the joie khof you borrowed an old flint-lock,

and keep it for your own protection." "Yes," said he, "God has provided the weapon as soon as it was needed." "But you may be assured I am not at all troubled for the reason you seem to suppose. I was thinking, when you spoke to me, of the great contrast between the people I see here about me and others that I have just now seen in my dream."

"What is the dream? Shall I bring in one of these dream interpreters? That means that we shall return safe and sound."

"No," I replied; "do you want to swindle me? I have no faith in these fortune-tellers and dreamers."

Quite all the people of Persia, and the Mussulmans in particular, believe that certain kinds of dreams are the means of Divine communications. They possess many books which profess to communicate the knowledge of dreams, and which give instructions as to the way in which the better class may be obtained, and bad ones avoided. The most important means of securing good dreams are prayers, repetitions of the Koran, pilgrimages, and fasts.

I remember now with what earnestness and evident credulity, mingled with serious exhortation, an old moollah once argued in favour of dreams as a proof of the Divine origin and truth of his religion. If one might judge of the condition of the soul from the face and stature, he would not have been taken for an ignorant, superstitious, or uncultivated man, for his person and bearing were decidedly prepossessing. As he entered the room I was impressed with his measured step, his proud yet gracefully erect bearing, which was materially increased by a tall stature and a long black mantle, or cloak, which contrasted well with a very broad and snow-white turban. His face was thought to be handsome. Its prominent features were a well-defined nose, small mouth, and dark eyes, over which hung eyebrows, which, if dark and heavy, did not, as the brows of the Tartar, meet together. His face and form were more after the pure Persian than Tartar type.

"Do not you Christians," he said, "believe that dreams are to be considered as tokens of the will of God? or is it because you have no dreams? I take it that it is because we Mussulmans possess the true faith that we only have dreams from God. We think them and the visions which we sometimes have to be among the strong proofs of the Divine source and truth of our faith. The sacred book is a revelation of the law, and treats of a system of equity and worship for all the world, but it is no guide to me in the perplexities and uncertain ways of my daily and earthly life. In dreams and apparitions God teaches me personally. I know that He has, in His mercy, warned me in such a way, and has sent to me from the unseen and spirit world."

"How so?" I asked.

"Well, I will tell you."

"It was the early autumn, and the first cool nights had come, so that we all had taken our beds from the roof and slept in the court. But one day there was a great change, the air becoming very close and hot. That night, long time after the other members of the family had gone to sleep, I sat in the court thinking of many things which had happened in the past year, and during the months of summer when we were gone from this house. At last I thought that I ought not to remain there longer time, so I went up to the roof, having only my cloak over me, having during the day ordered my bed to be taken up, and think-

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ing that I would only lie down for a part of the night, as it would be too cold after midnight to remain until morning. How long a time I had been there, and whether I was really asleep or awake, I can hardly tell, but it seems to me I was wide awake. I saw in indistinct outlines a form near the farther side of the roof, slowly moving in the darkness. As I looked upon it, and thought that it might be some member of the family, I perceived that it approached me, and now I could see some of its features. A dark-coloured mantle covered in part the head and shoulders, and fell in folds around the body. As the form came nearer in slow and measured motion, and yet without seeming to touch the ground, I perceived the eyes to be intently fixed on mine, and a stern face with a slight frown on the brow, and an uplifted hand pointing towards me. Then as it came nearer I discovered its unearthly look and bearing, and I knew there was approaching me a being from the unseen world. Springing up from my bed as the spectre came nearer, and stepping backward, I shouted, 'Who are you? What do you want of me?' But the form silently continued its steady approach, coming frightfully near. I stepped backward, again it came on. I moved back again, looking all the time towards the spectre. It came forward as I retreated, until at last I became conscious of a deeper darkness below me, and that I stood upon the very edge of the roof, whence another step could not be taken. The thought flashed across my mind, 'This spirit intends to kill me!' Then, looking in despair and with intenser earnestness, I saw it was my mother. 'Oh, mother!' I cried, 'will you kill me? Spare me now, and I promise that this year I will offer the sacrifice, and keep the feast.' Then the form vanished. Now," said the moollah, "I know that being to have been my deceased mother permitted in mercy to come and warn me. Last year I said that I would not offer the korbon (sacrifice). My mother was then living, and was greatly displeased with me. But this year I must offer that lamb and make the feast, or she will kill me."

The Imaum Jumeah* asked, "Have you ever had a vision? Do you not believe that God now reveals His will to us by means of dreams and apparitions?"

"No."

"Well, we do. In fact, I think these things must be confined to Islam."

"But," said I, "what do you mean? Tell me what you have seen, and then I can tell you whether Christians have anything like it or not."

"Well, I will tell you. In my youth I was much exercised about religion, and was not really satisfied in my own mind until the event I am about to relate. It happened that while I was in doubt what course to pursue in life that I fell very sick, and all hope of my recovery was abandoned. Yet I did not at any time lose my consciousness. My sickness was protracted, but it did not deprive me of my senses. One day I had been thinking particularly of my condition, when two friends came to see and comfort me. I told them that which they themselves knew, that it was probable I should not recover. I had determined with their assistance to make one last effort. I saw but one resource left. I make this request, that you will both help me to go to

the mosque. I will there pray that God would do for me what man cannot. These men did not think it possible that I could get to the mosque, but they were willing to please me. As they raised me up I put my right arm around the neck of one and my left on the shoulder of the other, and so was carried to the mosque. They placed a rug on the pavement, and kneeling towards Mecca I prayed thus: 'O God, Thou knowest that I desire to serve Thee. I now promise that if Thou wilt spare my life at this time I will surely consecrate it to Thy service. Now, therefore, if it be Thy will so to do, I would make these requests of Thee, that Thou wilt be pleased to save me from the trials and misfortunes of this earthly life. Also, as Thou knowest that I am in need of money, that Thou wilt give me that which I require, and grant that my patrimony may be restored me. I also ask that Thou wilt show me how I may best serve Thee, and spend my days usefully and honourably.' Having thus prayed, I returned to my home in the manner I had come. I laid down upon my bed, and soon thereafter fell into a trance. I seemed to be standing in an extensive plain like that which surrounds the shrine of the great Sayed. Then I saw the mighty throng rising from the graves which are about the tomb of the saint. On all their heads were turbans, and they seemed to be forming in line of battle. Each one wore his cimeter. I noticed in particular one turban, and thought it must be that of the great Sayed. As I pressed on towards it I saw the face of the saint. I observed the marks of care and the furrows which sorrow had made there. As I went near, the saint turned towards me and said, 'The furrows which you see are the marks left by the cares of the earthly life, and it is not given to any mortal to escape them. Behold it is appointed you your patrimony, and that which you need; as for your service, repair the mosque of Jumeah.' Then I fell into a sweet refreshing sleep, and from that hour began to recover.

"As soon as I was able to do so, I went to Kerbella and studied. After a time I started on my return. A band of robbers came upon us by the way, and took whatever clothing and money I possessed. Returning to the nearest city my case was brought before the authorities. But the robbers could not be found. A small allowance from the funds of the mosque was given to me, which enabled me to reach the capital. There, through representations made by me, the king was pleased to order the governor in whose province the robbery had been committed to make new efforts to seize the robbers. He also ordered that I should receive my patrimony. Soon thereafter the thieves were found, and everything I had lost was either restored or replaced, save such as I was willing to relinquish and forgive; and a fine was collected, a portion of which was given to me. Then also I was appointed the imaum of the congregation in the city of —"

"Now," said the imaum, "do you not think that such fulfilments of prayer are good proof of the truthfulness and Divine origin of our religion?"

"No," I replied, "it is no proof, for I assure you that Christians, and idolaters also, can say as much. Christians have dreams quite as well as you. I have observed that dreams do, in the main, agree with the general current of the life. Your angels come up in turbans, with sword, and mounted as your books teach you to think of them. The Christians come down through the New Jerusalem of the Bible.

* Honorary title sometimes given the chief moollah of a congregation.

Whatever else they may or may not wear, they never come in turbans. I should expect your infirmities to be affected somewhat by your imagination, and should think it probable that you thought your case worse than it was. It is quite reasonable to believe that the king might be influenced in your favour just in proportion to his superstition, or as his judgment may have been convinced of the justice of your claim. It is quite as reasonable to believe that you should obtain an answer to your prayer in your dream, as it is to believe that you desired and prayed for the things which you say you sought."

Addressing Moollah S—, I said, "How about dying? Do you think the faith of Islam supports Mussulmans well? And do they have visions then?"

"I have," he answered, "seen many die. All who die fighting for Islam have the assurance of the Koran. The religious teachers are in general calm, and anticipate reward or pain according as they believe that they have observed the requirements of our religion. So also it may be said of others. If they have kept the fasts, given alms, and observed the other duties, they expect acceptance with God, and to be delivered from the 'Angel of Death' through the intercessions of the Prophet Mohammed. In most cases there is great fear, and the fact is concealed if possible. But many are fully conscious all the time, and long to be released from pain, and quite all, in that hour, think this event to be the will of God, to be accepted as such."

"But Christians think they have a most decided advantage over you in that. If they cannot dream so well, perhaps they can die better than you."

"How so? I do not understand you," said the moollah.

"Then this incident will explain my meaning. I now think of a young Christian whom I once knew and saw die. No one was more fully aware of the nearness of death than she. All pain had ceased and her mind seemed remarkably clear and calm. Calling

all her friends near, she bade them all good-bye. Then seeing her mother weeping, she said, 'Mother, do not cry; I am happy. There, mother, there I see the angels. Come, mother, sing, and I will sing with you. Sing "How sweet the name of Jesus," "Jesus can make a dying bed." Kiss me, good-bye, mother. Once more sing,' and then she herself sang

'Oh, the transporting rapturous sight
That rises to my view;
Sweet fields arrayed in living green,
And rivers of delight.'

Then for a moment there was the stillness of death. We verily thought the angels were there."

"Was it day? and was it light in the room?" asked the moollah.

"Yes, the sun had but just risen and a flood of light shone through the open windows."

"I think," said the moollah, "the bright rays disclosed to her the angels standing in the beams of light, for we think that angels love so to come. Yes, we believe that true Christians, in dying, go to heaven; but we also think that their rewards and joys would be far greater if they died in the faith of Islam."

"No," I said, "moollah, you must not trust in any visions of the night or of the day. I mentioned this to show that the Christian too may have visions. But he does not trust in anything but the Word of God. We have a more sure word of prophecy, and a better guide—'The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My word, let him speak My word.'"

The Imaum Jumei, in a quiet and confidential tone, but with a significant look, said,

"I tell you these things that you may understand this people, and may see by what means they are to be influenced. If a man will succeed with them it is by such things. Will you take me with you to your own country? If so, be assured I am ready to go."

THE TROUBLES OF A CHINAMAN.

BY JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER VIII.—A SERIOUS CONTRACT.

WANG had not yet retired to bed; he was lounging on a couch, reading the latest number of the *Peking Gazette*, and frowning very decidedly over the panegyrics that that journal passed on the reigning dynasty.

Bursting into the room, Kin-Fo threw himself into an arm-chair, and blurted out,

"Wang, I have come to ask you a favour!"

"A thousand favours, if you will, my son," said the philosopher, as he deliberately laid down his newspaper.

"Well, for the present, one is enough. Show me the one I ask, and I will exonerate you the nine hundred and ninety-nine. However, I must warn you beforehand you are not to expect any thanks from me afterwards."

"I do not understand you," replied Wang; "will you explain yourself?"

"To begin with," said Kin-Fo, gravely, "I must tell you I have lost all my property; I am a ruined man."

"Indeed, indeed, is it so?" answered Wang, in a tone that implied that the intelligence did not give him any serious concern, but rather the reverse.

"Yes; it is true; you remember the letter that Soon ought to have given me; it announced the collapse of the Californian Bank. To me, you know, that means the loss of the last sapeck of my property. Except this yamen, and a thousand dollars or so to pay my debts, I have no means of living beyond another month or two."

"Then," said Wang, "it is no longer the wealthy Kin-Fo I have the pleasure of addressing?"

"No, it is Kin-Fo the impoverished now; but it matters not; poverty has no terror for me."

"Well said, my son;" and Wang raised himself as he spoke, and repeated, "Well said; here is the glad reward of all my teaching. Hitherto you have only vegetated, now you are going to live. Recollect how Confucius says that we always find fewer misfortunes than we look for; surely you remember the passage in the *Nun-Schunn*, 'There are ups and

downs in life; the wheel of fortune rests not, but rolls on; the breezes of spring-time are fickle, but rich or poor, do thy duty.' My son, we must now be off and on our way; we have now to earn our daily bread!"

The philosopher made a movement as if he were prepared to quit the sumptuous mansion without a moment's delay.

"Not quite so fast, my friend," said Kin-Fo; "when I tell you that the condition of poverty has no terrors for me, you must not understand that I have the least intention to endure it."

"How so? What do you intend?"

"To die!"

"Die!" repeated the philosopher, contemptuously. "You must know well enough that those who intend to be suicides never reveal their purpose beforehand; it is a secret they always keep."

"It is by the merest chance that I am not dead now," said Kin-Fo, calmly.

"What do you mean?"

"It was only because I found myself face to face with death," continued Kin-Fo, paying no regard to Wang's interruption, "and because I experienced nothing like emotion, that I flung aside the poison I was about to take, and came to you."

"Ah, yes, I see; you thought we might as well die together," Wang answered, smiling.

"Nothing of the sort, Wang; I want you to live."

"Why am I to live?" asked the philosopher.

"For the very purpose of killing me," said Kin-Fo; "this is the favour I have come to ask."

It was a startling proposal, but Wang gave not the slightest indication of surprise. Yet Kin-Fo, who was watching him narrowly, could not help fancying that there was a strange glitter in his eyes. Was there a stirring up within of the blood of the old Tai-Ping? Had the lapse of eighteen years been insufficient to quench the sanguinary instinct of his early days? Was there not something that kindled anew an ancient and forgotten glow in the very prospect of soiling his hands with blood, even though it were the blood of the son of his departed benefactor?

But in an instant the unwonted fire was gone, and the eye lost its flash, to let the countenance subside into an expression even more sedate and serious than its wont. He retired slowly to the couch from which he had risen, and said, thoughtfully,

"This, then, is the favour that you want to ask?"

"Yes, this. Perform it, and you may assure yourself that you have amply discharged every obligation due to my father or myself."

"And you are in earnest?" demanded Wang.

"Most solemnly," said Kin-Fo. "You know that on the 25th of June, the twenty-eighth day of the

sixth month, I shall complete my thirty-first year. Before that date I must die, and the covenant which I make with you is that I must die by your hands."

"How? when? where?" ejaculated Wang.

"How, when, where, I care not. My purpose is not to know. Whether sitting or standing, waking or sleeping, by day or by night, by open violence or by secret art, by steel or by poison, that rests with you. By the date I name to you I must die at your hands; and the condition which I insist on is that I am to have no intimation before hand. Thus shall every minute of the next fifty-five days be the source of the emotion of expectation, the looking out for the sudden termination of my life."

All the time that Kin-Fo had been speaking he had

exhibited an animation strongly in contrast to his ordinary lassitude; but his unusual impulsiveness had not, however, betrayed him into any reprehensible lack of prudence. He had fixed the latest limit of his death for a date five days before the expiration of the policy, being quite alive to the recollection that he had no available funds by which he could renew it.

The philosopher sat and listened gravely, glancing repeatedly, it might be in unconsciousness, at the picture of the Tai-Ping monarch that hung before him, but having no conception of how it had just been made a legacy to himself.

"You have heard what I have to say," said Kin-



KIN-FO HAS A FAVOUR TO ASK.

Fo, after a short pause. "You are ready, I presume, to meet my wishes? You undertake to kill me, do you not?"

Wang made a hasty gesture of assent. Perhaps he was thinking how, when under an insurgent banner, he had done worse deeds before. But instead of giving a definite answer to Kin-Fo's question, he met it by another, "Are you sure that you are so ready to sacrifice your chance of living on to a fine old age?"

"I tell you, Wang, my resolve is firm as adamant. To be old and rich is bad enough; to be old and poor is intolerable."

"And what about the lovely young widow at Peking? Have you forgotten her? Heed you not the proverb, 'The willow with the willow, the flower with the flower, two hearts united make a century of spring'?"

Kin-Fo shrugged his shoulders, saying, "A hundred years of spring may be followed by a hundred more of winter."

He reflected a moment, and continued,

"No; La-oo's life with me would be a blighting disappointment, miserable, drear. My death will secure her a fortune. And you too, Wang, I have not forgotten you; I have left you 50,000 dollars."

"Your foresight seems complete," replied the philosopher; "you do not leave me scope to raise up one objection."

"Yes, there is one obstacle," answered Kin-Fo; "and it surprises me that you do not suggest it. You must know that the deed to which you pledge yourself will cause you to be hunted down as an assassin in cold blood."

"Cowards and fools are caught," replied Wang, significantly. "I am willing to undertake the risk."

"And I, for my part," said Kin-Fo, "am resolved beforehand to insure you safe protection. I give you an indemnity."

He went to the table, took up a sheet of paper, and calmly wrote, in clear, bold characters,

"Wearied and disgusted with my life, I have voluntarily sought my death.

"KIN-FO."

RETORTS FROM THE WITNESS-BOX.

AN American paper lately reported the following anecdote.

"I call upon you," said a pompous counsellor, "to state distinctly upon what authority you are prepared to swear to the mare's age?"

"Upon what authority?" said the ostler, interrogatively.

"You are to reply; not to repeat the questions put to you."

"I doesn't consider a man's bound to answer a question afore he's time to turn it in his mind."

"Nothing can be more simple, sir, than the question I put. I again repeat it. Upon what authority do you swear to the animal's age?"

"The best authority," responded he, gruffly.

"Then why such an evasion? Why not state it at once?"

"Well, then, if you must have it—"

"Must! I will have it!" vociferated the counsellor, interrupting the witness.

"Well, then, if you must and will have it," re-

joined the ostler, with imperturbable gravity, "why, then, I had it myself from the mare's own mouth."

A simultaneous burst of laughter rang throughout the court, and the judge on his bench could with difficulty confine his risible muscles to judicial decorum.

I have repeatedly (says Mr. Grant in his "Recollections of the Bench and the Bar") seen counsel in our courts of law, who were attempting to be very witty at the expense of some adverse witness, get the laugh completely turned on themselves, by the happy retorts of the victim under cross-examination.

A clownish-looking lad, about twenty years of age, who, judging from his appearance, one would have supposed had not two ideas in his head, was put into the witness-box. The counsel for the prosecution, by whom he had been called, having asked him a few questions, all of which he satisfactorily and promptly answered, the counsel for the defence rose with an air of self-importance, and pulling up his gown on his shoulder, said, "Now, sir, I have got a few questions to ask you."

"Very good," said the witness, drily.

Counsel. I suppose, sir, you know the prosecutor very well?

Witness (hesitatingly). Vy, yes, I do know him.

Counsel. But I mean intimately.

The witness was silent.

Counsel. Come, sir, answer my question. Do you not know the prosecutor very intimately?

Witness. Not werry intimately.

Counsel. Do you mean to say, sir, that you—

"Vy," interrupted the witness, with great seeming simplicity, and amidst shouts of laughter from all present—"vy, I don't wish to say anything at all about it, if you'd only let me alone."

Counsel. Come, sir, don't be impertinent. Tell me if you ever heard of the prosecutor's daughter?

Witness (hesitatingly). The prosecutor's daughter?

Counsel. Ay, the prosecutor's daughter.

Witness. Vich of them do you mean?

Counsel. What, has he got so many of them?

Witness. Oh, lots on 'em, sir. (Loud laughter.)

Counsel. Well, I mean the one that you're in love with.

Witness (with great archness of manner). Vich of them is that?

Counsel. Oh, you know that best yourself.

Witness. Vell, if I do, I don't mean to be a tellin' it to every one. (Renewed laughter.)

Counsel (speaking in rather a low tone of voice). Come, sir, tell me and the court whether you are not on the terms of marriage with the prosecutor's daughter.

The witness was silent.

Counsel. Come, sir, answer the question. You were very prompt in your answers to my learned friend.

Witness. Your "learned friend" spoke much louder than you do, sir.

It is impossible to convey any idea of the effect which this retort had on the court. The judge could not restrain his laughter within reasonable bounds, but joined audibly in the universal shout; while the poor counsel looked the very impersonation of chagrin.

Singularly enough, in the same court and on the same day, the laugh was equally turned against another counsel, who was doing his best to be at

once severe and witty at the expense of an adverse witness. The latter was one of the skin-and-bone class of persons, and by a curious coincidence so was the counsel. You could not look on either without coming to the conclusion that to partake of a substantial meal must be something notable.

"So, sir," says the counsel to the witness, in the regular brow-beating style—"so, sir, you have been in the prosecutor's house?"

Witness. I have.

Counsel. Have you been often?

Witness. Sometimes. (A laugh.)

Counsel. That, sir, is not an answer to my question. I ask, have you been in this person's house often?

Witness (with much archness of manner). I don't know what you mean by often.

Counsel. Have you been twenty times?

Witness. I never kept 'count how many times.

Counsel. Come, sir, don't be rude. I ask you, have you been twenty times in this man's house?

Witness. I can't speak positively as to the number of times.

The Bench. About the number of times; speaking according to the best of your belief?

Witness (with great readiness and politeness). I should think, my lord, I have been in the prosecutor's house from fifteen to twenty times.

Counsel (with great harshness of manner). So, sir, though you could not answer the question when put by me, you found no difficulty in answering it when put by his lordship.

Witness. His lordship put—

Counsel (interrupting witness). Stay a little, if you please, sir.

Witness. Oh, certainly, as long as you like; I'm in no particular hurry. (Loud laughter.)

Counsel. Perhaps, sir, you would condescend to tell the court what your object was in going to the prosecutor's house?

Witness. The court has not asked me the question.

Counsel. Don't be insolent, sir; I have asked you the question.

Witness. Then I can't answer you.

Counsel. You must answer me, sir.

Witness. I can't; for I often went without knowing the reason why. (Laughter.)

Counsel. Can you inform us, then, about what particular hour you were in the habit of visiting his house?

Witness (looking towards the bench). Is it necessary that I should answer that question, my lord?

The Judge. If you can; I do not see why you should not.

Counsel. Come, sir, answer the question.

Witness. I should suppose it generally was between one and two o'clock.

Counsel (his countenance brightening up as if he had made some important discovery). Oh, I see; that was about the dinner-hour, was it not?

Witness. I never inquired what was the dinner-hour.

Counsel. You say that your favourite hour for visiting this man's house was between one and two o'clock?

Witness. I never said anything of the kind.

Counsel (pulling himself up). What, sir, do you mean to deny what you have just said? Recollect, sir, you are on your oath.

Witness. I said that that was generally about the time but I never said anything about "favourite" hour.

Counsel. Well, sir, perhaps you would have no objection to tell us whether you were in the habit of partaking of the prosecutor's dinner when honouring him with your visits at the particular time you mention?

Witness. I do not see what that has to do with the present case.

Counsel. It's not what you see, sir. Pray, sir, answer me the question, whether you were in the habit of partaking of this man's dinner on such occasions?

Witness. Whether I partook of it or not depended on circumstances.

Counsel. On what circumstances, sir?

Witness. Why, on whether I was asked to partake of it or not. (Loud laughter.)

Counsel. Yes; I dare say you never declined an invitation when you got one.

Witness (with great emphasis). Never, sir. Never refuses a good dinner when I can get one. (Renewed laughter.)

Counsel. Ay, I can well believe that. And I'm sure you would do the dinner of any friend ample justice.

Witness. I always do my best, sir, on such occasions. (Loud laughter.)

Counsel. I don't doubt it; you have always, I suppose, a good appetite when at the table of a friend?

Witness. Always, sir.

Counsel. Ay, you look the very picture of a hungry fellow.

Witness. Yes, sir, both of us look the picture of hungry fellows: we look as if we were kept on starvation allowance.

The walls of the court resounded again with the shouts of laughter which followed this severe retort, the effect of which was greatly heightened by the peculiar archness of manner in which it was made. The learned gentleman was completely crestfallen, and made no further efforts to be witty at the witness's expense.

STEAMER STRIKING AN ICEBERG.

IT used to be said that in case of striking an iceberg, the only difference between going at half-speed and full speed was that, in the former case the ship would go down in a minute, in the latter in half a minute. The possibility of being saved in such a collision was hardly contemplated. This prevalent feeling renders all the more remarkable the providential deliverance of the passengers in the Arizona, of the Guion line. This steamship, which, with the exception of the Great Eastern, is the largest vessel afloat, and which sailed from New York on the 4th November, bound for Liverpool, met with a frightful accident while crossing the northern edge of the Newfoundland Banks. On the night of Friday, the 7th, at about eight o'clock, she ran headlong on a huge iceberg. This occurred in 47° north latitude and 53° west longitude.

At the moment the vessel struck the iceberg she was going at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. The crash was terrific, and spread dismay among the three hundred persons on board, comprising the passengers and crew. For a moment a panic was imminent, but the coolness of a few passengers dissi-

pated the danger, and the hands of the officers were left free to attend to the rescue of the ship. It is supposed that the cause of the accident was a failure to keep a proper look-out. When it occurred the passengers were gathered as usual in the saloon. Suddenly a crash was heard, and upon reaching the deck a terrific sight met the eyes of the affrighted passengers. Towering above the steamer's bows rose a huge iceberg, threatening her with instant destruction. Out of the submerged field rose three huge cone-shaped masses sixty or seventy feet into the air. There was danger that one of these would topple over and crush the ship into a shapeless mass. A rumour that the vessel was sinking added to the dismay, the more so as the rumour seemed fully justified from the fact that the steamer, on striking the iceberg, listed heavily to starboard and sunk visibly forward, creating the impression that she was settling at the bows.

At this time, between the passengers and destruction there stood only the slight barrier formed by the collision bulwark, and at first it was impossible to tell whether it had not also been driven in. Should it prove so, all on board the ship were doomed to death. A hasty examination revealed the fact that the bulkhead had not given way, and that the forehold was free from water. It was then decided to make for St. John, Newfoundland, the nearest port of refuge, which was reached at eight o'clock Saturday evening. When the passengers realised the fact of their safety they readily responded to the call of a clergyman on board, at whose suggestion they assembled in the saloon, and a prayer of thanksgiving was offered to Him who holds the waters in the hollow of His hands. After prayer all joined in singing the doxology—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Varieties.

NEW ENGLISH STAMPS.—New English stamps were issued at the beginning of this year, valued one halfpenny, penny, three-halfpence, and twopence. The design is similar to the old one, but not so well engraved. They are, however, more agreeable to use; the gum is better, and the colour does not come off. Until the stock of the old stamps at present in hand is exhausted they will be sold conjointly with the new ones. The die of the old penny stamp had done duty, with very slight variations, for forty years. In 1840 they were printed in black, a few with initials "V. R." in the upper corners. It was difficult to tell if they were obliterated or not, so, in 1841, they were printed in red-brown; a year or so after this the die was retouched, and a perceptible improvement made in the diadem and eye of the portrait of her Majesty. In 1850 the stamps were printed in red, and the edges perforated, and in 1864 letters were placed in the two upper corners.—WILLIAM LINCOLN, *High Holborn*.

A FOGGY CHRISTMAS.—Among the strange incidents of the climate of 1879 in England, Christmas-day will long be remembered in London as one of the darkest Christmas-days on record. We have had rainy Christmas-days by the dozen, and Christmas-days, like that of 1860, remarkable for intense cold; but a Christmas-day such as the last, when the metropolis and its suburbs were enveloped in so thick a fog as to render locomotion a work of difficulty and danger, is happily a rarity. There are, however, few evils without some compensation; and although a thick yellow fog must tend to mar the enjoyment of holiday-makers it is not viewed with universal dissatisfaction even when it wraps a festival in gloom. Many people are glad

to have a good excuse for not moving out of doors on a holiday, and for making it a genuine day of rest by their firesides. Thieves also, with a keen eye to business, delight in a fog on a general holiday; indeed, the more intense the darkness the better pleased is the thief, especially at Christmas time, when persons with money and watches in their pockets are not always in a condition to take care of them. To gas companies, again, a fog never comes amiss, and a festive season is to them doubly festive when gas-burners are doing the duty of daylight in hundreds of private houses, and the profits of the companies are being swelled accordingly. A "foggy" Christmas is, in truth, not necessarily in every respect a dismal one.—*Pull Mall Gazette*.

STORES AND SHOPS.—The gist of the objections of ordinary traders to co-operative stores is found in the following manifesto, issued by a Conference of trade delegates. The objections are chiefly directed against Crown servants "competing with ordinary traders." In the first place, the delegates entirely object to any servants of the Crown—active or retired—being allowed to trade, but they do not object to them co-operating strictly amongst themselves. Secondly, they think that the use of State names for the purpose of trade marks and signs should be entirely prohibited, as they give an unfair prestige to stores so using them, and are at the same time misleading to the public. Thirdly, they think that all co-operative stores, whether conducted by Crown servants or others, should be made to pay their full and proper share of taxation. Of course, the delegates "recognise that all public servants have a perfect right to invest their savings or other moneys if they choose, and they trust that on the completion of the Parliamentary inquiry some remedy may be found which shall have the effect of restoring the servants of the Crown and tradesmen to their respective positions."

THE FRANKING SYSTEM.—The abuses of this system soon became so great that we find a witness employed by the Post Office giving evidence before a Parliamentary committee that, among other ridiculous articles which had been sent through the Post Office free, were: "Fifteen couple of hounds to the King of the Romans;" "Two maid-servants, going out as laundresses to my Lord Ambassador Methuen;" "Doctor Crichton, carrying out with him a cow and divers other necessities;" "A box of medicine for my Lord Galway in Portugal;" "A deal case with fitches of bacon for Mrs. Pennington, of Rotterdam;" and "Two bales of stockings for the Ambassador to the Court of Portugal." These, however, were all Government franks, but as at that early period no limit was put to the size or weight of Parliamentary franks, there is no reason for doubting the assertion that live deer, haunches of venison, pianos, etc., had been sent free through the post by members of both Houses of Parliament.—*Antiquary*.

EGYPTIAN SLAVE TRADE.—The suppression of the slave trade is declared by Colonel Gordon to be impossible as long as the demand exists for slaves in the Egyptian territory. Mr. Sturge, in a letter to the "Times," speaking in behalf of British anti-slavery opinion, says:—"It is, perhaps, well that by the retirement of Colonel Gordon the British public should be effectually convinced that the so-called anti-slavery trade enterprises of Egypt were but 'an organised hypocrisy,' designed to cover the vast ambition of the late Khedive, embracing nothing less than the conquest of Abyssinia and the equatorial regions of Eastern Africa. With slavery as the 'corner-stone' of Mohammedan institutions, it is happy for mankind that these designs have so signally failed. But, while justly charging this hypocrisy on the Egyptian Government, we are compelled to ask ourselves, is there now on this question any real sincerity in our own? In the days of Lord Liverpool's Administration the anti-slave trade policy of England was felt and recognised in almost every Cabinet in Europe. But now, when the Berlin Congress would have made the slave trade piracy, the action of England was especially, it might be almost said ostentatiously, wanting. The Turkish flag still covers the traffic in the Red Sea. We suspend our diplomatic relations with the Porte on account of an individual case of religious intolerance; we make no such protest on account of this crime which desolates Africa, and sets at defiance what is, or at least was, the cherished policy of England." It is now stated that a Convention has been signed for the suppression of the slave trade in the Sultan's dominions.